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AUTHOR	Bishop, John E.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Two elementary-grade activities on geography are combined. The first activity employs a group discussion approach to investigate neighborhoods and residences. Given data about a neighborhood area in Houston, students make predictions and express feelings about future developments in the area. The second activity investigates urban planning in Moscow. Issues that are examined include the future of cities, urban sprawl, the morphology of a large city, and the relationship of people to an urban environment. It is hoped that students learn to apply the regional method of geography to a study of Moscow, and that they develop an understanding of their local urban environment. Problem-solving and inquiry skills are utilized as teaching techniques. Five investigation questions and 24 activities are offered. The activities described above are two of 12 (SO 009 140 through 150) teacher-developed elementary instructional activities and 17 teacher-developed secondary instructional activities (SO 009 151 through 167) comprising this series on geography-related topics. They are available individually and as elementary or secondary sets. The materials are intended to help teachers in developing units for the classroom. Topics that are covered require student inquiry into current problems such as land use, development, pollution, and population. Mastery of geography skills is emphasized. Instructional approaches include simulations, role playing, mapping, group discussion, experiential learning, field excursions, gaming, and case studies. (ND)

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INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES SERIES, IA/E-1

"WHO SHOULD HAVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD?" CHILDREN'S IDEAS ABOUT THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AGING NEIGHBORHOOD.

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by

Dr. John E. Bishop, Dr. Jack M. Sheridan
College of Education, University of Houston

Given data on the present status of a neighborhood area close to the CBD of Houston, participants can make predictions and express feelings regarding the nature and quality of future developments in the area. Participants then can compare their ideas with those made by intermediate level children who participated in a similar activity. Discussion also will be given to the children's proposed actions for controlling changes.

BACKGROUND AND USE OF MATERIALS: "WHO SHOULD HAVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD?"

SO 009 140

The maps and pictures are of an older neighborhood area close to the CBD of Houston. Recently many homes and apartments have been sold or leased for use as day care centers, antique shops, insurance offices, eating establishments, and a variety of individually owned special service shops. The change has paralleled Houston's rapid growth, which in turn has resulted in a need for more services of the type seen on Map B. Many citizens feel the area is deteriorating and have begun to organize for its preservation as a residential area.

Children first can view pictures and maps to determine what is happening to the neighborhood area (trend toward commercial). Judging from the present trend, they can predict the specific use of some former residences now standing empty. (See Map B) A reasonable prediction is the conversion of the homes to specialty service use. The children then can react to the statements made by the residents and determine who should have the neighborhood (business, residence or both?). Their final activity may be the statement of proposals to ensure environmental quality for the area.

TYPICAL STATEMENTS MADE BY RESIDENT OWNERS

IN THE CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD

Resident A

"I see the present changes as a part of an expanded inner city. We were once considered a suburb and now we're part of the inner city."

"The practical end is a commercial area. Of course, if it were in the bounds of practical possibility, I'd like to see it stay as a complete neighborhood with residences. But it isn't in the cards. We're too closely a part of the inner city. Change like this happens in every city, and I can't see us here as an exception to the general rule."

Resident B

"The disturbing thing about this neighborhood is that it's dangerous to step out at night alone. That's the greatest change touching my life."

"I'll never forget how I felt the first time I saw the square metal building going up. (See photo of Alabama Garage.) That spot would have made a wonderful apartment site, which is how we wanted to see Alabama Street change. We were equally disturbed with a restaurant right behind us. We knew Alabama Street would change, but we hoped for apartment houses rather than businesses."

"I'd like to see more families with children buy into this neighborhood. I'd like to see it remain residential."

Resident C

"We're extremely unhappy about what is happening in our block and in surrounding blocks! Real estate men buy up property with an eye to the future. Then they rent to anyone and neglect the property. This is not right to us! It doesn't make for pleasant living conditions."

"I know one family that didn't want to sell. They had a very nice home, but the place next door became a 'dump'. They finally sold out of desperation."

"We want to stay here the rest of our lives. This is home! We like it here. We like being near downtown, the library, the art museum, and the bus line."

Resident D

"The restaurant on Alabama Street (see photo) shouldn't be in this area. They've never given us too much trouble, but this neighborhood is a place for homes. Instead of the restaurant, we would have much preferred an antique shop."

"I'd rather have high rises and clinics than booze joints, restaurants, and stuff like that."

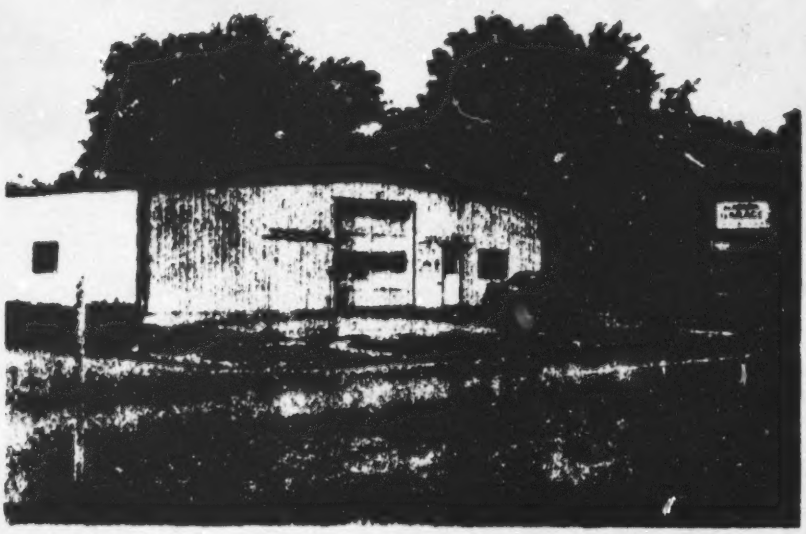
"I don't know how we can keep it residential. We missed the boat years ago when we didn't begin to take measures to keep 'undesirables' out."

Resident E

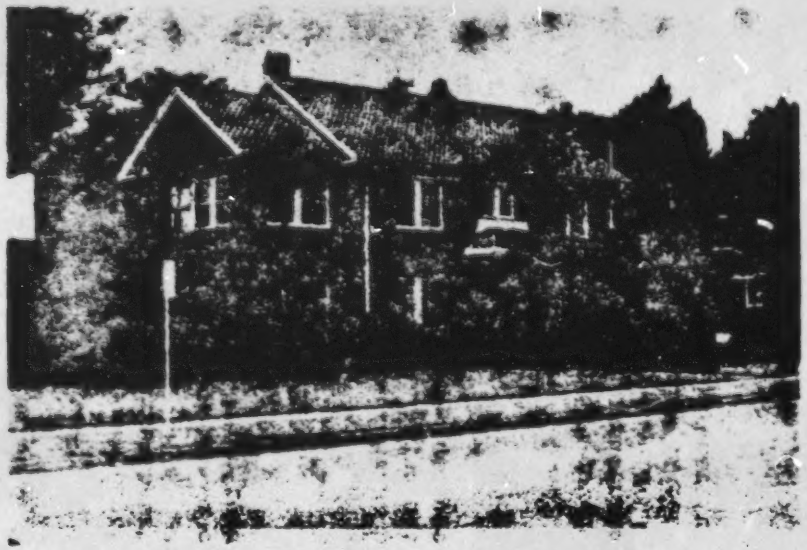
"Perhaps it might be better to let the whole area go commercial. The cost of modernizing all these older residences will be too great. It would be hard to get people to cooperate in a uniform, rebuilding venture."

Resident F

"I believe city governments should make efforts to preserve areas like this one as residential neighborhoods. Tighter deed restrictions or strict zoning should be implemented. I hate to see this neighborhood become a hodgepodge of resident-businesses, rooming houses, and mini-theaters, which is what it will become if some controls aren't established."

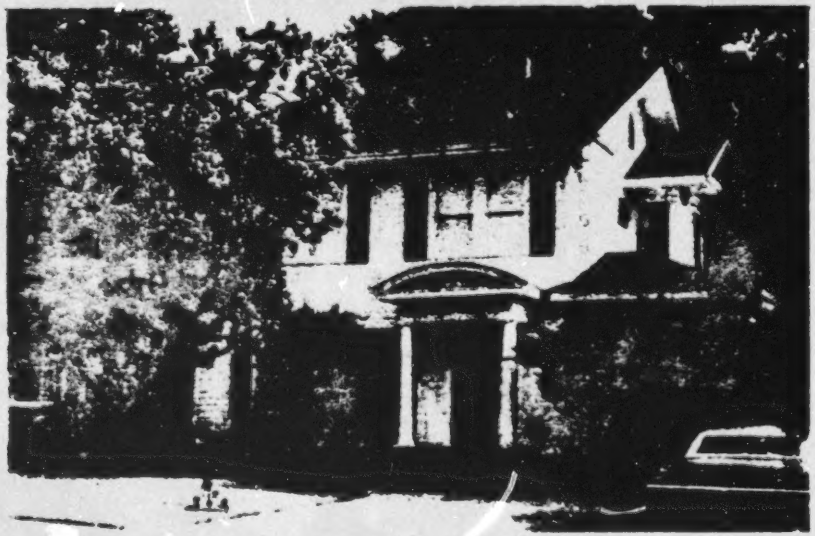


This auto repair garage replaced a large home.

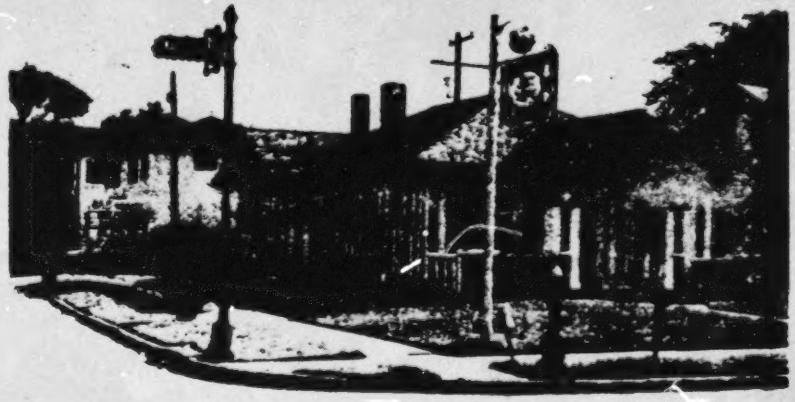


What will happen to this home? Will it become a business? Should it remain a residence?

A former residence turned into a restaurant. A home was demolished so there would be parking space.



A typical home in the changing neighborhood.



This home became a privately owned specialty clothing store.

National Council for Geographic Education

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES SERIES IA/E-2

MOSCOW, BLUEPRINT FOR A CITY

THE ONLY REALLY PLANNED CITY IN THE WORLD!

by

Ben Vass
Coordinator of Geography, North York Board of Education
Toronto, Canada

Part A - Affords the group a very brief background to the approach used in this sample urban unit. The S.E.S. series suggests how we can conceptualize the learning experience, individualize activities in order to recognize student interests and abilities, and to identify the interdisciplinary nature of geographic education.

Part B - One of the most important new developments, in all societies, is the movement into urban areas. Cities and urban studies are becoming of very great interest to youngsters. The city is a special kind of region. Hopefully, the pupils will learn to apply the regional method to a study of Moscow and, more importantly, develop an understanding of their own local urban environment.

Several activities and inquiries are included so that the pupil will begin to understand the urban region.

Guide To The Teacher:

The Social and Environmental Studies series is designed for a program of geographic education extending each year from grade 1 to grade 13.

The conceptual frameworks of understanding are used as a type of common denominator which provides a continuum of learning throughout the pupil's entire school experience. The numerator of the learning equation can very with the content, pupil interest, local area, teacher background or any other variables. The conceptual schemes program, however, provides a clear set of behavioral objectives which develop and mature as the student looks more analytically at man, his environment, and the societal matrix in which he lives.

There is no core program in the Social and Environmental Studies outline which must be taught at any given grade. It is assumed that the teacher will relate the new unit to the level of experience of the individual child and that this fundamental relationship must be achieved before any learning can take place.

SB009 140

In this program we are recommending that the pupil learn the conceptual frameworks of understanding, rather than any specific content, in order to utilize them in new situations and new experiences. These concepts will enable him to relate information globally, communicate graphically, to better understand the peoples of the world, interpret and apply new information to pattern development, appreciate the interdependence of man, intelligently make decisions about resource allocations for the future, develop a set of cultural values, become aware of international relationships and better understand the forces of change which are shaping the world of the Year 2000.

If these indeed are our learning objectives in the field of Social Studies, we must develop learning units which will advance the pupil, step by step, toward these goals.

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

The Regions of Man - Part 1

UNIT 2. MOSCOW, BLUEPRINT FOR A CITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Unit Profile
2. Introduction
3. Investigation I - Moscow, Blueprint for a City
4. " II - Historic Decision
5. " III - The Moscow Region
6. " IV - Living in Moscow Today
" V - Planning for the Future

Introduction to the Urban Environment

The purpose of this unit is to explore the concepts that deal with the complex urban region. Moscow has been selected since it is particularly noted for its urban planning and land use control. The major questions investigated in this unit include the following:

1. The future of our cities in the Year 2000.
2. How can we prevent the urban sprawl of major cities into huge concrete connurbations?
3. An examination of the morphology of a large city.
4. How do people relate to the urban environment and how does it relate to their everyday lives?

"Moscow, Blueprint for a City", is basically designed as a teacher-oriented unit with supportive audio-visual materials.

The unit is divided into five investigations. Each of these sections develops a succeeding stage of understanding from the general idea to the particular. Once again the pupil is asked to relate this understanding to his own environment.

In each of the investigations the pupils are given the opportunity to solve problems and develop their inquiry skills. A variety of activities such as optional readings, photographic interpretation, simulation games, and descriptive analysis are included in the unit.

Investigation I focuses on the concept of the region. It provides realistic understanding of the different types of regions and the urban region in particular.

Investigation II involves a study of the factors which combine to create a major urban centre. These factors include both physical and human considerations. Why is it that some places have grown to fantastic populations and others have not?

Investigation III is a particular look at the Moscow region. Here we see a sample study of one of the world's largest cities. How is it similar to our own area? How does it contrast with our area?

Investigation IV is concerned with the way of life in Moscow today. It begins to look at the human reaction to the environment and to the political system which prevails. How does the life style of the average Muscovite compare with our own?

Investigation V presents students with a value problem. What type of city would we want to live in, if we could design it for the future? How can we benefit from the study of some of the other cities which make up our global village?

In answering questions like these, the pupil begins to see some of the problems and prospects which relate to his own area. He ought to better understand the problems of the city and the need for participation in the planning process.

ACTIVITY 1 - WHAT IS A REGION?

This investigation is an introduction to the basic idea of regionalism. It should help pupils to understand how environmental data can be organized into regional patterns. These patterns will then enable the pupil to examine the complex world community in a more intelligent manner.

1. Review the ideas given for the fifth conceptual framework in the introduction.

2. You may wish to have the pupils play a game on the blackboard to reinforce the simple pattern idea. Pupils can draw their own X's and O's patterns and the other children can try to recognize the figures drawn.

ACTIVITY 2

In this exercise the pupils are asked to mark their homes on a map of the community. If possible obtain a large scale map from the municipal assessment office. These will provide an outline showing every lot in the community.

1. If this is not possible, draw a simple map of the school area with the main streets shown. Assist pupils to locate their home areas.

2. The results of this activity may be very interesting to you since they very often indicate sociological relationships among the students. Occasionally, you will discover a situation whereby a pupil who lives in an isolated location from the rest of the class, may be reluctant to work well in class groups.

ACTIVITY 3

The region quiz map is a simple problem study which will further clarify the concept of regionalism to the students. It is contained in the audio-visual kit which provides a copy of the picture quiz for each student. You may wish to collect the sheets, after the pupils have completed the exercise, for future use.

1. Try to relate the idea of the different kinds of regions to the experience of the children involved. Quite often their holiday travel experience will relate to different areas and they may be encouraged to incorporate this environmental experience into the class discussion of the kinds of regions.

2. Since this is a teacher-oriented unit, it is hoped that you might be able to share some of your travel experiences with the children. Slides of different places and ways of life will help the pupils become more aware of the regional concept.

3. Parts of the City Region

   Encourage the pupils to fully discuss this idea. Many of the students do not have a basic understanding of where they live in relationship to their urban region. Hopefully, they will become more analytical of and interested in their immediate environment.

ACTIVITY 4

This investigation is designed to provide the pupils with a concrete basis for understanding their environment, and the application of regionalism to the world's cities.

1. You may wish to include a field trip of your immediate city region with this activity. It would provide the pupils with the experience necessary to really understand their urban environment. Be sure to take photographs and notes of each of the three sections.

2. The pupils may like to build a bulletin board display which shows the three main urban areas.

3. Always restrict the scope of your field activity to two or three specific sample areas. Do not attempt to cover the whole city.

ACTIVITY 6 - THE CITY QUIZ

Do not be too surprised if the pupils cannot identify the cities! The purpose of the activity is to illustrate to the pupils the fact that urban areas are becoming larger, more alike and that they share the same problems.

1. You may wish to have the pupils participate in teams in order to discuss their observations of the city photographs and the questions on them.

2. The class as a whole should discuss the various answers and students should be encouraged to defend their solutions.

INVESTIGATION 2 - HISTORIC DECISION

The human factor has always been very important in the development of cities. This investigation provides activities which will help the pupils to understand the role that man has played in the evolving urban environment.

Historical decisions have been responsible for the establishment of many communities. Whether they grew to become major cities or disappeared as ghost towns depended on a complex pattern of unrelated decisions and circumstances.

ACTIVITY 8 - HISTORIC DECISIONS

Note that this activity is a prerequisite for the simulation game in Activity 9. All of the pupils should listen to the record or a tape made from the record.

1. The ideas presented should be selected and interpreted by the students. One method is to prepare cards which outline some of the key factors.

2. The pupils should begin to realize the different types of information which they are selecting. Interdisciplinary ideas such as political reasons, economic factors, etc., should be discussed with the class.

ACTIVITY 9 - SIMULATION GAME

The main factor to keep in mind, for a role-playing simulation game is the idea that the pupils must do their own thing. Allow them to speak freely and interpret the clues as they understand them.

It becomes a useful exercise for the teacher, to carefully observe the level of understanding, depth of perception, and the ability of

each child on a continuing basis.

1. Rearrange the seats in the classroom to resemble a courtroom for the public meeting.

2. The lawyer teams may wish to have a planning session. These can be held in the hallway if seminar rooms are not available.

ACTIVITY 13 - THE MOSCOW REGION

This photograph interpretation study is designed to provide a sample method of investigating the local home area of the pupil. The Moscow photographs are a specific sample of the urban centre of a major city.

The comparison with the pupil's home town will help to focus his ideas and interpretation of his own environment.

Activity 15 provides another item which can be used as part of the continuing evaluation of the individual pupil's progress.

ACTIVITY 14 - URBAN STUDIES EXERCISE

1. It may be useful to have pupils begin this newspaper photo collection at the beginning of the unit.

2. Have the pupils relate other photographs of their area with those contained in the entire unit. The similarities and differences will depend largely on your own location! Have the pupils discuss this idea.

3. Discussion, evaluation and interpretation are a major part of this activity. Be sure that the students have thought thoroughly about the ideas and clues suggested by the photographs.

INVESTIGATION 4 - LIVING IN MOSCOW TODAY

This investigation provides an excellent opportunity to introduce the whole idea of propaganda. Do the children believe everything they read? How do you determine what is the average and what is the exception? Do we have problems of propaganda in Canada?

Also included in this investigation is the human dimension, of the way of life in Moscow. Cities are not composed of merely buildings, roads, and parks, they are concerned mainly with people.

The familiar items and comparisons in this section should help the Canadian pupil to better understand the viewpoint of the Soviet citizen.

ACTIVITY 16 - MOSCOW TODAY

1. The interview-type information contained in this activity

provides the basis for seminar discussions. Divide the class into groups of 5-6 pupils. Each group will examine the 23 topics and decide on their comments or reports to the class.

2. This is an unstructured activity and the pupils, themselves, must decide on the significance of the ideas presented.

3. Be sure that the seminar or discussion groups make use of the photographs in this entire unit.

INVESTIGATION 5 - PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The concept of urban planning is as ancient as the first cities. However, the modern, complex, industrial society has created a chaotic, polluted, crowded megalopolis. Somewhere between the Roman design, and the present congestion, the effectiveness of urban planning has been neutralized.

Planning must be an exercise in participatory democracy!

The public, somehow, must become familiar with the basic needs of a community.

Hopefully, this investigation will begin to kindle a spark of interest in the young student mind, so that he will begin to observe and to learn.

His local environment is his laboratory and the future of our cities is his responsibility.

ACTIVITY 21 - DISCOVERING YOUR PLAN

This activity attempts to maximize the use of the pupil's own local environment. Hopefully, the ideas of urban studies which the child sees for himself will be more meaningful than merely talking about urban planning in the abstract.

It is important that each pupil <u>think</u> about his home environment, so that he will see and understand what he looks at every day.

1. At this grade level there is no attempt to introduce the proper terms for land classification. It is sufficient that the pupil recognize the six simple categories suggested.

2. The game of "monopoly" may be introduced to suggest the idea of land use, ownership and the economic factors of land values, etc.

ACTIVITY 24 - BLUEPRINT FOR A CITY

This is an activity which will summarize and apply the concepts introduced in this unit.

1. In many cases, it is helpful for the teacher, to assist the class

as a whole to construct a basic pattern of their present community. With this common core the groups can then eliminate the things which they do not like in their community and make their own suggestions regarding a futuristic design.

2. It is important that the pupils have an opportunity to exercise their imagination and creative thinking.

3. Be sure that all of the necessary services are included in the plans so that it can be regarded realistically, even though the economics may be currently impractical.

4. Have each group prepare a brief oral presentation to explain the features of their design.